

Organizational behavior culture in the work place

[Business](#), [Work](#)



Many years ago, countries are bound by walls which usually prevent access of foreigners in an effort to keep their culture intact and the jobs available within the country were only offered to their citizens. However the world is evolving and the business world is changing with it. Many companies have discovered that diversity of employees is an asset. They have discovered the benefits that diverse personalities bring. With diverse personalities is the diversity of talents and capabilities which would be effective in improving productivity.

By pushing for cultural diversity, they are also inviting knowledgeable people into their companies as well as creativity; both of which are for the company's benefits. Although companies may be one and willingly embrace the foreign workers, the variety of culture may also invite conflicts. Cultural differences may surface as one may see another person different from him. According to Ben Harrison, " In my work, most managers haven't even a clue as to what diversity means let alone to say whether it's a liability or an asset.

When they hear workplace diversity, most people believe you're talking about equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. But the management of diversity - and the focus here is on management - is just that. It's about operations and procedures, and policies. You are managing the diverse needs of your employees, not their cultural differences" (Black Enterprise, 1993). In an organization, cultural diversity may be an expansion of knowledge, talents, creativity and skills of the workforce.

But with such diversity, conflicts may arise hence proper management of a diverse workforce is very important. This paper will examine the characteristics of a diverse work place as well its impact in the industry. It

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will also tackle the causes of the cultural diversity in the United States and how companies with diverse workforce manage this diversity. Literature review Cultures are not haphazard collections of customs and beliefs.

They are integrated, patterned systems not simply by their dominant economic activities and related social patterns but also by the sets of values, ideas, symbols and judgments. At work place, it also has its culture of doing things and all those working there must be able to embrace this culture the people themselves are from different cultures. Cultures trains people to share personal traits at work and this integrates each culture and helps to distinguish it from others. For instance, the work ethic and individualism are the core values that have integrated American culture for generations.

Companies and organizations are either under pressure to transform and include people from all backgrounds in a fair and equitable manner, or they at the same time be transformed and once they have been transformed, they are often challenged by the poor inter- diversity relationships and also the understanding of the need for immediate or long term transformation. Companies and organizations that encourage cultural diversity will have good results because the workers will be open to each other, share their experiences and will be willing to learn and embrace the culture of their work place without any hindrance.

The transformation and diversity management of the programmes that tend to isolate, ignore and intimidate workers are self- defeating. If at all there is any person or department or group in the work place which feels threatened, the process will be wasted and more it could negatively impact the organization. Organizational culture is the environment of the organization-
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how it perceives, thinks, feels about it, and responds to situations affecting its purpose, program and the way it is run. Organizational culture is based on the history, important ideas, experiences, traditions and language shared by the members of the organization.

When members feel and act in similar ways and hold common assumptions, their share patterns of thoughts and behavior give meaning and stability to the organization. An organization's culture at work place explains how it functions. All activities and procedures, such as recruitment, job selection, orientation and the design of organizational strategies and systems are strongly influenced by the organization's culture. The organizational culture at work place has to be learned when new members enter the organization through recruitment and selection.

The organization is likely to look for new members who already have similar assumptions, beliefs and values. Still these new members have to be acculturated to be able to function effectively in that new culture in the new work place. The organizational culture reflects the larger culture in which it exists (national versus international, high- tech versus research). The organization's mission, goals and objectives, functions, attitudes, values and criteria which are integrated into the organization's structure and operations also reflect the external culture.

In order to develop organizations as a team they need to develop an understanding of their dependency. Interdependency and interdependency. Once employees understand that they need each other to survive and succeed, then they will observe that their actions, positive or negative will greatly impact on them and the organization that they are working for. It is <https://assignbuster.com/organizational-behavior-culture-in-the-work-place/>

true that the quality of life that people lead, the kind of clothes that they wear, the humanity that they exude, the food on their tables and the education of their families will greatly depend on the quality of the relationships within and outside work place.

When people see in this context, then they begin to understand that there is an urgent need to work as a team for success. The more the diverse of the backgrounds, skills and talents of the workers, the more they will come closer and work as a team. Organizations must create diverse cultures in their organizations so that employees will be in a position to understand and know what they are supposed to do and at what particular time. The organization that does not have its culture will not succeed because the employees will work the way they want and sometimes according to their own feelings and thoughts.

This will bring a lot of misunderstanding in the organization and the staff will hurt each other because there is no organizational culture which guides. Although cultural rules people what to do and how to do it, people don't always do what the rules say should be done. People use their culture actively and creatively, rather than blindly following its dictates. This is also applied at the work place, not all of them do as they are required. People are not passive beings who are doomed to follow the work culture like programmed robots.

Instead people can learn, interpret, and manipulate the same rule in different ways. Being arbitrary about your work place culture, may lead to universal problems. For one thing, you may attract the wrong kind of employee. A worker looking for fun, the flexible environment change and <https://assignbuster.com/organizational-behavior-culture-in-the-work-place/>

they perform poorly if they accept the position that they have found themselves in a structured atmosphere. Employees who are more task-oriented will not fit in with a culture that values fluidity.

It is also important that for both employees and managers that each work place make a specific distinction on their true office environment. By doing this way means attracting and retaining the right employees, at the same time letting the employees know from the beginning what is expected of them. Making the work life balance policy available is important steps in helping employees balance their work and their personal lives. But these policies can be ineffective if employees feel they are prevented from using these policies.

When supporting policies that are aimed at helping employees to balance their work and their personal lives, it is important to ensure that the work place culture supports the employee's use of the policies. A supportive work place culture has been associated with many benefits for both the worker and the employer, including higher levels of effective commitment to their organization, lower intention to leave the organization, higher levels, lower levels of stress and the experience of less conflict between work and family commitments.

In addition to positive effects of the supportive work place culture, the perception of a supportive work place culture is associated with greater utilization rates of work-long balance policies. The culture in an organization is important in determining whether the workers will use the policies and their attitudes towards the organization. For workers and employers to enjoy

the benefits of the work life balance policies, the culture and the environment need to be addressed when implementing such policies.

In addition to the positive effects of a supportive work place culture, perceptions of a supportive work place are associated with the greater utilization of the work policies. The culture in an organization is very crucial in determining whether the employees will use the policies and their general perceptions towards the organization. For the policies to be implemented, the work environment must be addressed first. Offering the policies is not sufficient as the workers need to feel comfortable using the policies. The managers can make employees to feel comfortable using benefits.

CULTURE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT According to Shirley Harrison, director of the diversity management for Philip Morris, " Work force diversity is already a reality in American business"(Black Enterprise, 1993). The workplace of the United States becomes a pot of many races. It gives way to interaction of various cultures since people who are of different ethnicities come together in the workplace. The workplace serves as a ground which facilitates meeting of people from different social, religious, political, economic, linguistic and educational traditions.

Before Americans had to travel to other parts of the world to experience the variety of culture, now this is no longer necessary since vast number of people around the world is moving to the United States (University of the Pacific, 2006). The main driving force for this is the economic betterment which foreign workers aspire and see in the United States. The labor market of the United States is always in demand for both skilled and unskilled

workers. This availability of jobs in the United States has a very strong pull on foreign workers to work in country.

Due to the shortages of manpower within the country, the labor government procures additional human resources from other countries through immigration legislation. The presence of immigrants has a huge impact in the labor market of the United States. Foreign workers brought savings for many companies since they have reduced the overall production costs because they receive relatively lower wages compared to the citizens (Henderson, 1994). The work force in the United States has changed rapidly. From the male dominated work force, it has opened to women and people of color.

That is why its work force is made up of various cultures (Black Enterprise, 1993). Theorists have argued that greater contact of men and women will be supplemented by increased numbers of women in the work place. It was also perceived that the increase in number of women in the work place may also change the usual stereotyping of women (Thomas et al. , 2001). It was suggested that the increase in number of the underrepresented groups such as people of color and women can enhance the effectiveness of the majority. With the threat coming from the minority in the work place, the majority would become even more productive (Thomas et al.

, 2001). As globalization pushes the business world to serve clients from all over the world, business leader deemed it necessary to employ workers from various ethnicities. Their relationship in the workforce may be fundamental in building relationship with clients from around the world. In a study in the 1990s the work place in the United States was expected
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undergo metamorphosis. The change in the work place will be driven by race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, and age. In 1987, Hudson's Institute projected that 85 percent of the net growth of the work force can be accounted to immigrants, women and minorities.

It was projected that by the year 2000, 47 percent of the work force will be comprised of women and that 61 percent of all American women will be employed. The African-Americans will make up 12 percent, the Hispanics will make up 10 percent, Asians Pacific Islanders and Native Americans will make up 4 percent and the third world people will make up 25 percent of the workforce. Based on age, 51 percent of the labor force will be composed of people aged thirty five to fifty four. But there was a projected decline in the labor force in the people aged sixteen to twenty four to just 8 percent of the labor force (Henderson, 1994).

This indeed true for the United States is now accepting foreign workers to work in its various industries. Immigrants and foreign workers are usually coming from the Third World Countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. They are usually met with oppositions from American citizens who are threatened by their presence. The American citizens are afraid that the immigrants will destroy the cultural values and moral fiber of the nation. People who immigrate to other countries to work have to adapt to the cultural differences and must fit themselves to the dominant culture.

In work force with variety of culture, it is now considered an asset for the organization since along with their presence is broad range of view points and problem solving skills (Black Enterprise, 1993). The presence of foreign workers in the United States is viewed with ambivalence by many
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Americans. Some sees it as a solution to the problems the workforce while others view it as a threat to the Americans. Business leaders however have another view because they are having huge profits when they employ foreign workers since these workers are willing on work on menial positions (Henderson, 1994).

For business leaders, it is an advantage not just for the profits but also for the total benefits they can get. Americans maybe talented, creative and intelligent yet when a company is considering the global market, it may as well consider the talents and the creativeness of the people around the world. If people of similar culture face confrontations with their co-employees, then more confrontations should be present when people from various cultures are working together. The company has to properly manage these differences in order any encounter from worsening.

Good diversity management is vital in an organization which holds variety of culture. They have to be encouraged to be always at their best. The organization must also push them to develop their strengths and present innovative ideas (Black Enterprise, 1993). Negative stereotypes can develop in workforce when the organization accepts foreign workers because Americans tend to look at people from developing countries as uncivilized and are of lower intelligence. Ethnocentrism or the belief that their own culture is superior is the root cause of many cross-national problems.

It can be a barrier incommunicationbetween employees coming from different races (Henderson, 1994). Equality must be worked out in every organization which caters cultural diversity in order to foster interaction among employees. An organization with variety of culture can make use of <https://assignbuster.com/organizational-behavior-culture-in-the-work-place/>

affirmative action in order to balance the organization. But affirmative alone will not work since many employees would feel that they are at a disadvantage. But if affirmative action is coupled with valuing of the differences, somehow it will work.

Within that particular organization, they must organize programs which are designed to foster the awareness of the differences and acceptance of cultural differences. The lack of understanding may worsen situations but if organizations bridge cultural differences by these programs, the employees would be able to work efficiently together (Black Enterprise, 1993). Laws prohibit discrimination based on race, religion, national origin and sex. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 is a Congressional Act addresses the rights of foreign workers.

Legal conditions that pertain to hiring aliens are delineated by this act. It is illegal to hire foreign worker who are undocumented. Based on this act, the unauthorized persons who hire undocumented foreign workers are going to face penalties in the forms of fines and imprisonment. For this reason, employers must verify the foreign workers if they were qualified before hiring them. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is responsible for enforcement. Should any employer was caught hiring illegal alien; they will be fined ranging from \$250 to \$2, 000 per illegal alien hired.

A second violation would cost the employers a fine ranging from \$250 to \$3, 000 and a continuous violation results to imprisonment (Henderson, 1994).

Results and discussion Cultural diversity in a work place can be positive in a company if it was properly managed. American companies which accept foreign workers are inviting new pool of knowledge, creativity and talents in

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their company. The presence of variety of culture in a company can be beneficial since people from different culture would be helping each other enhance the company's productivity and efficiency.

The company is responsible in assuring that foreign workers in there company will not be negatively stereotyped especially that there are laws that protect them. Culture is an attribute not of individuals but of individuals as members of groups It is transmitted in the society. People learn culture by observing, listening, talking, and interacting with many other people. Shared beliefs, values, memories, and expectations link people who grow up in the same culture. Enculturation unifies people by providing them with common experiences.

Culture can be defined as the way of life people, they way the live, work, associate, their beliefs and their practices. Culture in the work place is related to various factors such as gender, language and ethnicity. People having different skills, qualities and attitudes to work are working together in a work lace and the increasing level of cultural diversity at work place, in the era of global economy, must be explored as a quality associated with diverse and unique expertise.

Diverse talents of the individuals must be respected and by giving due regards and respect the work place diversity which can be utilized for the benefit of the organization. In doing so, the prejudices. And stereotyping should be avoided. Good working relationship between people from diverse cultural backgrounds is required and be encouraged. Appropriate steps are required to be taken for reducing the work place stress and also maintain a healthy and strong interpersonal relationship at the work place.

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Effective communication will be helpful in building trust and at the same time it is a challenging task in a situation of cross-cultural difference. It is because of the fact that even the concept of trust is interpreted in different ways in different cultures and therefore trust is built in different ways according to one's culture. In case of managing the cultural differences at work place, one must be aware of the meaning of culture. The awareness of cultural differences as well as similarities will be helpful in effectively communicating with others.

Instead of trying to diminish the opposite force, it is better to leverage the opposite, for gaining strategic advantage in the context of diversified corporate culture. Culture rests on the human capacity for cultural learning. It encompasses rules for conduct internalized in human beings, which lead them to think and act in a characteristic way. **RECOMMENDATION** The management of corporations should embrace change as a way of managing and accepting diversity of culture. There are three ways in which the work place culture of an organization can be changed and this include;

a) Getting the management behind the culture change- Managers supporting a traditional organization culture, which emphasizes the pursuit of the work goals and then ignore the personal lives of the employees undermines the success of the organization. The managers should be role models for their workers by using policies that will benefit them. It is very important that these managers use these policies in an appropriate ways and also give employees accurate information on how the policies are supposed to work.

Middle level managers are particularly important in the change processes as they are directly in touch with the work environment of the workers. The final

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implementation of the policies will be effective if the managers are convinced of the need to implement policies. The managers need to know why the policies are introduced and how they will improve organizational performance. b) Communication and education- Changes in the work place does not happen overnight and it requires commitment from both sides. It is generally very important to build the consensus for culture change from the top to the bottom.

Education on the role of the workplace culture is necessary to convince the managers of the importance of a supportive work place culture. Deliberations between the management and the workers will increase mutual understandings and expectations and develop solutions to problems that affect the organization. Regular discussions between the management and the staff will provide a feeling of ownership of the problem solving processes c) Changing the key values and norms and cultural artifacts- The cultural artifacts are the characteristics of an organization that supports and reflects its work place culture.

Norms and values are the most important cultural artifacts in an organization. The most important key norms and values that are likely to undermine the work life policies is the belief that personal lives and work should be completely different. When trying to change work place culture it is critical to address the key norms and values. It is also important for the organizations to think on the key norms and values existing in the organization and communicate them to the employees. REFERENCES Cross-cultural_differences, 1000ventures.

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